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House of Representatives

The House met at 9 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer: Almighty God of the universe, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

We pray for the gift of wisdom to all with great responsibility in this House for the leadership of our Nation.

As the Members disperse to their various districts and our Nation enters a week which celebrates Memorial Day, may we all retreat from the busyness of life to remember our citizen ancestors who served our Nation in the armed services.

Grant that their sacrifice of self, and for so many, of life, would inspire all of America's citizens to step forward, in whatever their path of life, to make a positive contribution to the strength of our democracy.

Bless us this day and every day, and may all that is done within these hallowed halls be for Your greater honor and glory.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. POMPEO) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. POMPEO led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Repub-

lic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The Chair will entertain up to five requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

AMERICA'S VETERANS DESERVE QUALITY HEALTH CARE

(Mr. POMPEO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. POMPEO. Mr. Speaker, what is taking place today in America's Veterans Administration may be the most egregious case of friendly fire in the history of the United States of America.

This harm to our veterans from our team is coming not from firearms, but from an enormous bureaucracy that is incapable of dealing with providing health care to our Nation's warriors. It is unacceptable.

Words alone, Mr. President, I have to say, are not enough. We need action, not anger. We need results. We need delivery of health care to our warriors now, and whether that health care comes from inside the Veterans Administration or from outside, we need to get folks off our waiting lists, out of lines, and in to see doctors and folks who are prepared to take care of them.

The sacrifices these men and women made are enormous. As a veteran, I certainly understand that.

As a Member of Congress, I understand that it is my responsibility to make sure we fix this challenge, this bureaucratic mess that our Nation has put these veterans in now for years and years.

As we approach Memorial Day, we need to all take this seriously. I would urge this House to continue to work to perform its function of oversight and

to correct this most egregious situation and get these veterans the care that they need.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. AMODEI). Members are reminded to direct their remarks to the Chair.

BRING BACK OUR GIRLS

(Ms. KELLY of Illinois asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, it is with great concern for the safety of over 200 kidnapped Nigerian girls that I urge my colleagues to vote for the National Defense Authorization Act.

This bill includes an en bloc amendment I offered requiring the Department of Defense, in consultation with the Department of State, to report on the efforts to assist in the search and rescue of the young women who were abducted in Nigeria last month.

There is more that our government can do to address the threat that Boko Haram poses to international security. By Congress knowing more about this terrorist group, their movements, the safety of the girls, and what the U.S. and Nigerian Governments can do to protect these girls and others like them, we will be in a better position to end Boko Haram's reign of terror.

Families weep in Nigeria. The global community holds vigil for these children.

I thank the chairman for including my amendment in the en bloc package and urge my colleagues to vote to help "bring back our girls."

In regard to Memorial Day, I want to thank those who gave up their tomorrow, so we could have today.

JOB WELL DONE

(Mr. BOEHNER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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H4787

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker and my colleagues, today we will take up the NSA reform bill.

I rise today to thank Chairman ROGERS, Chairman GOODLATTE, Mr. CONYERS, and all, in a bipartisan way, who have come to address this very critical reform at a time when America still is under the threat of terrorism.

There is another group of people that I think it is appropriate to thank today, and that is the tens of thousands of Federal employees who work for these agencies that go out there every single day to help make America secure and Americans secure elsewhere around the world.

Job well done.

P5+1 NEGOTIATIONS

(Mr. LOWENTHAL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LOWENTHAL. Mr. Speaker, the United States is currently in negotiations with our P5+1 partners and Iran over the fate of Tehran's illicit nuclear program. I support the President's efforts to negotiate an agreement to end Iran's nuclear weapons question, and I am hopeful, but I am also concerned, that this goal may or may not be achieved.

As the initial 6-month period for negotiations comes to an end on July 20 and as we debate the NDAA, it is crucial for Congress to speak out on what a good deal with Iran would look like.

Congress must insist that final agreement ensures that Tehran has no pathway to a nuclear weapon. As the President and Secretary Kerry have repeatedly said, no deal is better than a bad deal.

Any agreement must include an inspection and verification regime that provides for anytime, anywhere inspections to ensure that Iran is complying with a deal.

OUR VETERANS DESERVE THE BEST MEDICAL TREATMENT

(Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, the number of veterans has declined by several millions in recent years, due to deaths and decreases in the numbers of our military, yet the problems in the VA and complaints by veterans about poor treatment and long delays have grown by leaps and bounds.

It is definitely not a money problem because no department or agency has received the megabillions and high percentage increases that the Congress has given to the VA; yet, despite years of criticism for Members of Congress and the media, the problems have grown worse.

The only effective solution is competition. I said in a speech to a veterans group many years ago that eligi-

ble veterans should be given a card and allowed to go to any hospital they choose, including those considered to be the best in the Nation. In this way, VA hospitals would be forced to provide better service, or Congress could and should close the ones with rapidly declining and/or very low occupancy rates.

Mr. Speaker, our veterans deserve the very best medical treatment possible.

UNITED STATES AIR FORCES ESCAPE AND EVASION SOCIETY

(Ms. TSONGAS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. TSONGAS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today, in advance of Memorial Day weekend, to recognize the brave men and women of the U.S. Air Forces Escape and Evasion Society, or AFEES, whose bravery and ingenuity in the face of danger is surpassed only by their dedication to this country.

Formed in 1964, AFEES is an organization created by aircrew members who evaded capture by enemy forces during foreign wars, with the assistance of resistance organizations and patriotic nationals of foreign countries. This organization includes downed aircrew members and people who directly aided them in escape and evasion.

In recognition of these heroic efforts, I introduced the U.S. Air Forces Escape and Evasion Society Recognition Act of 2014 this week to award this deserving organization the Congressional Gold Medal. Awarding this medal will serve to recognize a group of veterans whose names are synonymous with service, selflessness, and fortitude.

I invite every Member of this Chamber to join me in cosponsoring this legislation.

NIGERIA AND BOKO HARAM

(Mr. FRANKS of Arizona asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FRANKS of Arizona. Mr. Speaker, last night, the House passed an amendment encouraging our regional partners and allies to develop an inter-agency strategy to counter the vicious terror attacks perpetrated by Boko Haram.

Boko Haram is the terrorist group that recently kidnapped over 300 innocent young Nigerian girls.

Mr. Speaker, it is impossible for any of us to imagine the fear and heartbreak these children and their families are experiencing.

For some time, it has been known that these groups have extensive links between Boko Haram and al Qaeda affiliates; yet, despite my multiple pleas 2 years ago to former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, she would not even consider acknowledging Boko Haram's religious ideology and list them as a foreign terrorist organization.

Consequently, Boko Haram is stronger today than ever before. This Islamist group continues their rampage of terror because the administration—this administration—as they have so many times before, refused to look at the facts as they were.

I hope now we will face Boko Haram for the terrorist group that it is and defeat it and, somehow, bring these innocent young girls home.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT

(Mr. BARBER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BARBER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of the National Defense Authorization Act, which we will vote on today. The act supports a strong national defense and gives our men and women in uniform the tools and resources that they need to do the often-dangerous jobs that we ask them to take on.

Southern Arizona is home to Fort Huachuca, the 162nd Wing of the Air National Guard, and a strong defense industry, all of which are vital to our Nation's security.

We are also the proud home of Davis-Monthan Air Force Base and the A-10 Thunderbolt. This heavily armed plane we call the Warthog may be ugly, but it flies slow and low and provides close air support and protection to our troops like no other aircraft we have today.

This bill includes a provision I offered with my Republican colleagues, Representatives HARTZLER and SCOTT, to keep the A-10 flying. It passed with overwhelming bipartisan support in the Armed Services Committee.

Today, I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to pass this critical legislation for our servicemembers and their families and the security of our Nation.

THE NATIONAL SECURITY AGENCY AND SNOOPING ON AMERICA

(Mr. POE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the NSA is out of control. It seizes massive amounts of data on Americans without their consent, without their knowledge. This action violates the Fourth Amendment and the PATRIOT Act.

The USA FREEDOM Act is supposed to halt these literally unwarranted intrusions. The bill, in which I am a cosponsor, passed the Judiciary Committee unanimously.

However, this bill that deals with secret surveillance and mischief by the NSA was recently changed at the Rules Committee. These changes appear to allow multiple interpretations as to what the NSA can and cannot do. The bill now confuses what it intended to make clear. It seems we are back where we started.